

Kirkland Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC)

March 3, 2011

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Kirkland City Hall, Council Chambers

Present: Jac Cooper, Ryan Noel, Dan Meyer, Les Utley, Penny Sweet (Chair), Kathryn McNeill, Julie Huffman (staff), Ellen Miller-Wolfe (staff)

Absent: Shirley Day

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 9 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the October meeting and December retreat were reviewed. Motion to approve October minutes by Dan Mayer and seconded by Les Utley, approved by all. Motion to approve retreat minutes by Les Utley and seconded by Ryan Noel and approved by all.

Chair Reports

Chair Penny Sweet reported that Les Utley has tendered his resignation as he will be serving on the State's Lodging Association Board. The City is recruiting for two positions. Les suggests that LTAC solicit someone from Stuart McLeod's team. Ryan will ask the General Manager of the La Quinta if she is interested in joining. Also mentioned was a KDA representative or someone from the annexation area—potentially a representative from the casino.

Discussion of Retreat Findings

The LTAC Group would like to change the name of the committee to Tourism Advisory Committee. This should go to the Economic Development Committee and then the City Council for approval. Suggestion made for Tourism Development Committee that portrays a more active role. Committee voted unanimously to recommend Tourism Development Committee to the City Council.

Building relations between businesses and tourism interests is a main goal for this committee. How can this group make that happen? One idea was to formalize the ambassador role. Attending the networking meetings is one way to reach out to businesses. There is need to explain what this group can do for those businesses. What is it that this group has to offer? Tourism program services were suggested. Another option is for the group to advocate for tourism legislation. Les notes an effort to put together a Washington Tourism Alliance that is industry-funded and controlled. Ellen offered staff to provide legislative alerts. Committee discussed which groups they would like to connect with, and the next meeting it will finalize that list and decide who will provide representation to that group. Brainstorming can continue at next meeting. It was suggested that the group look beyond Kirkland to groups in Seattle, Bellevue and elsewhere. Another option for this committee is to discuss signature events. This is a forum that makes sense to lead/convene the discussion.

Chamber Request for LTAC funds for Visitor Center

Bill Vadino, representing the Chamber/KDA, presented a request for funds of up to \$15,000 to purchase items that are allowable by the RCW for the new visitor center/KDA/Chamber offices in downtown Kirkland. A written request distributed. Items possibly funded would be signage, literature racks, displays, interactive kiosks and related furnishings. Jac brought up the criteria the committee used for the LTAC grants, including a business plan. Penny commented that she asked Bill not to go to that level for this presentation because it is a moving target. What they don't know is what other businesses will be able to underwrite, so didn't want to ask for particular items. The intent is to get it

done as cheaply as possible with as much sponsorship as possible. Those that are not removable are not allowed by RCW unless the City has an ownership interest in the facility. Penny said she met with City staff to be clear on what could be funded. Signage is allowed if it can be removed. Penny is hoping the office will be attractive to grab people and bring them in. They will need to have more detail before they go to City Council but would like the Committee to approve the concept because this is an extraordinary effort that LTAC will want to be a part of. The committee members agree it's a good idea, but would like to see more detail for what they are spending. Ryan, Jac, and Penny nodded that this was a concern to them. Penny would like the LTAC recommendation considered at the next City Council meeting.

Les moved that the Committee approve KDA/Chamber access to a budget of up to but not to exceed 15k to help fund the development of a visitor's center. Jac seconded.

In further discussion, Jac commented that in concept he agrees with it, and thinks it is what Kirkland needs. However not having a budget, not knowing if there will be a continued existence, makes him nervous. Ryan wonders if it would happen without this money. Les assures the LTAC the office will be open and have continued existence with the KDA/Chamber. Penny said need definitely there. Kathryn has confidence in the new KDA/Chamber organization, but also understands concern for lack of detail. Bill plans to be in the office in 2 weeks. In the future, Ryan commented, even if it is a moving target, it would be good to see the target so they know where their money is going. Motion carries.

Les asked whether Public Works was going to put up Visitor's Information center signs on the 3 main arterials coming into downtown. Les would like them on Lake, Central and Market and even on 405. Ellen cautioned that the City may not be able to put a sign on 405, but could consider putting it on City property at the end of the ramp. Penny and Ellen will talk with the Public Works Department.

The LTAC meeting adjourned at 10:07.



March 2, 2011

Penny Sweet, Chair and
Members of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC)

Dear Members of the LTAC Committee,

As discussed at your retreat, the Kirkland Downtown Association (KDA) would like to request reserve funding to equip a visitors center at the new location of the KDA and Greater Kirkland Chamber of Commerce. The new location is across from the Heathman Hotel at 223 Kirkland Central in the former storefront of a yogurt business.

Our request is to spend up to \$15,000 on visitor center related items that meet the criteria for items that may be eligible for LTAC funding. These items include signage, literature racks, displays, interactive kiosks and related furnishings.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Vadino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Bill Vadino
Executive Director
Kirkland Downtown Association